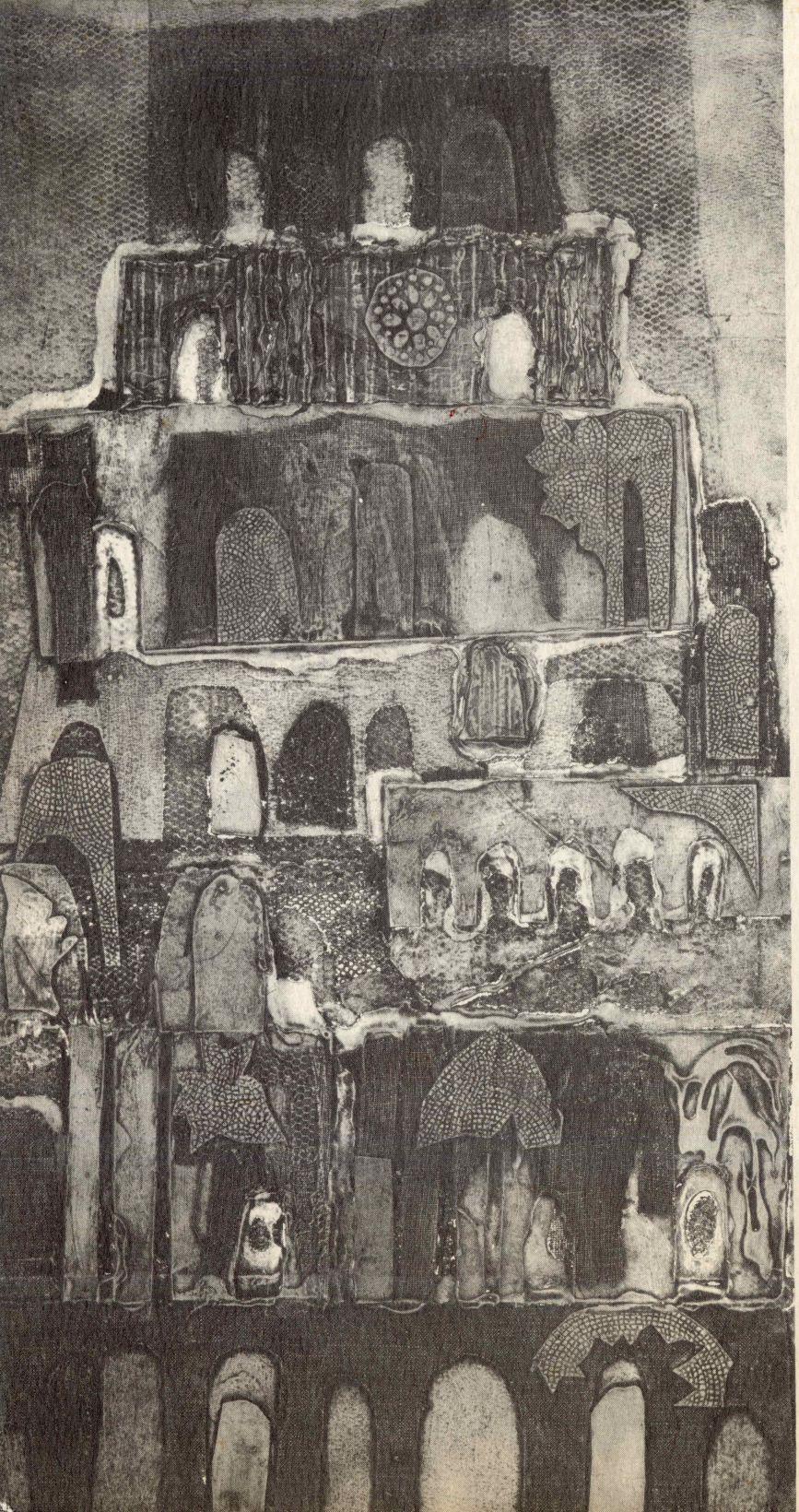

TOWER

SPRING, 1970

SUPPLEMENT

THE TOWER

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THE LITERARY PUBLICATION OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MONTEVALLO

FICTION

When the T.V. Screen Broke ..... Harvey Estes

POETRY

Waiting For Rooms ..... Robert Walters
She Left ..... Pauline Beach
Haikus ..... Pauline Beach
The Impossible Dream ..... Robert Walters
Heavy on My Mind ..... Don Lancaster
City ..... Harvey Estes
Grammar ..... Yaakov
Silent Daughters ..... James M. Joyner
#20 ..... Becky White
Strings ..... Denis Hermecz
No Time To Sing ..... Marion Huddleston
At the First Day's End ..... Denis Hermecz
Yet . . . There is Time ..... Dennis Sandlin

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PATIENCE

WAITING

BOOKENDS

SALT OF THE EARTH

WHEN THE T.V. SCREEN BROKE

The thin colors of the rainbow were slightly tinted by the muddy water in which they were reflected. The brown city glistened after the rain like a dead animal encased in glass.

Through the shroud of smog he could hardly make out the green outline of hills in the distance. He stumbled onward towards those green hills as if in a dream.

A drop of rain hung trembling from the eaves, glistening in the evening sun like a fragment of broken glass. Its trembling was snapped off by the smooth line of its fall. It passed the wrinkled, unshaved face crouching under a ragged hat. The rain drop was followed by a spit of tobacco juice whose curved flight ended in a brown, jagged splat like a beetle that the sidewalk had rushed up to meet.

He stopped to look in a display window. The tiny pink dress was covered with lace as if a fairy had written out the little girl's three wishes on it with her magic wand. The flowing silk was interrupted by a jumble of jagged lines on the wrinkled glass as a hulk of confused limbs and twisted flesh limped by carrying his tin cup. As he turned to follow the cripple, he noticed that the manikin in the window had no arms or legs.

The worn concrete was rough passing under his hand as he walked over the bridge. The sound of the train passing under it made him want to call home. He took the dime out of his pocket. The face on the coin was like his father's, calm, unblinking even in the storm raised by the train passing below. On the background of the coal in the freight cars whizzing by, the silver stood out shiney and proud. The dime slipped from his hand. He watched the car into which it fell slide down the long elevator shaft of the train until it disappeared, destined for some unknown ground floor.

He walked down a back alley through the crumpled newspapers and candy bar wrappers. On the old movie advertisements the faces smiled at him from decaying bodies of stars rotted from the stagnant rain water that had soaked their paper casket. He still looked for that green horizon between the tombstones of skyscrapers.

Out on the street again, he watched the traffic light, metallic god with four all-seeing faces, hung from the heavens by electric wires. It flashed one red eye. The massive beast of chromium and steel halted panting as the old lady waddled in front of it. Then it dashed away through the jungle of street signs and parking meters, jerking the little golden-haired girl against the back seat as she clutched her raggedy-Ann.

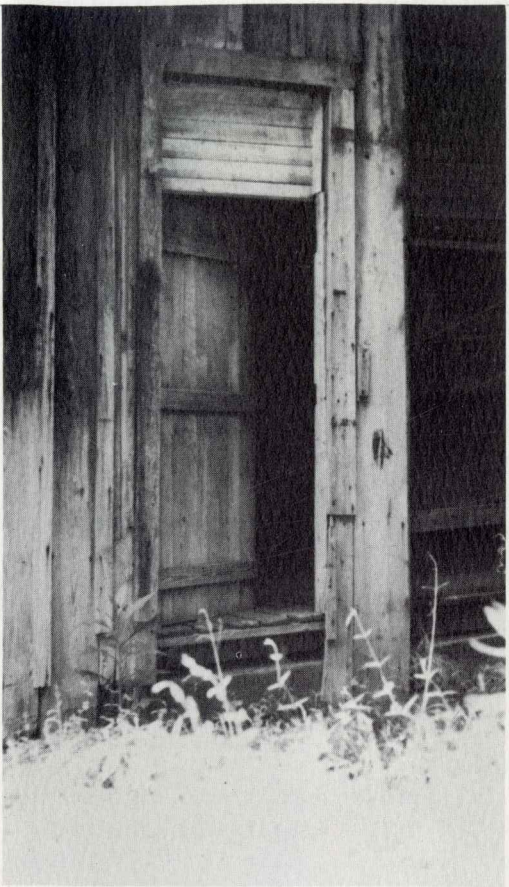
It was getting late, but he was close to the edge of town. He could see the steeple of the Baptist church a few blocks away. The cross on it stood out like a black, four-legged spider. The evening sky behind it was a sea of blood, luminous red, fading, fading, into the eternal black pit of night.

The darkness came at last. The lights of the city glowed behind him like an ancient galaxy of tired stars. He passed the last faint ember of a street light. Frantically his eyes searched the horizon for those green hills he had seen.

Nothing. Only black mountains edged by gray sky.

He slowly turned and walked back into the warm sea of chaotic neon.

From a cloudless, starless night sky, whatever gods may be looked down on a lone figure tramping dream-like across the infinite desert of black sand.



WAITING FOR ROOMS

An exit without a self
I am like a door
waiting for rooms.

A wave speaks on a shore,
and I am like that wave's word,
without ocean or audience,
reflection without source,

I am like a door,
(sequence without event,
ending without substance)
waiting for rooms.

Sometimes so deep in night
that I would shut upon myself
and the locked-up self might
make an enclosure,

and say at last these four walls are me,
the oppressive heft
of silence comes and lures
the floor away, and all
that is left is a door
waiting for rooms.

She left
A leaf caught in a storm
Green, broken, alone.

Shattered,
Her teddy vulgarly looseing its stuffing.
Gingerbread stale.
Beads broken,
Scattered
A million ways,
Only a whisper of one pearl left
Rolling
Now a black pea.

She left
A lotus covered by an emerald frog.
One shooting star in an eternally black
night;

She left.

HAIKU

As a pink balloon
Floats into eternal blue,
So dies an infant.

HAIKU

Only a child runs,
Sensing timelessness in youth
Through the warm wet rain.

HAIKU

Sweet opiate dream—
Enveloping onion skin
Cob-web distortion.

THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

To dream
The impossible dream
Is just that.
O world of La Mancha!
Caught in a fool's wind,
Winding around the hand
Of the irrational technician,
Staggers blind in terror.

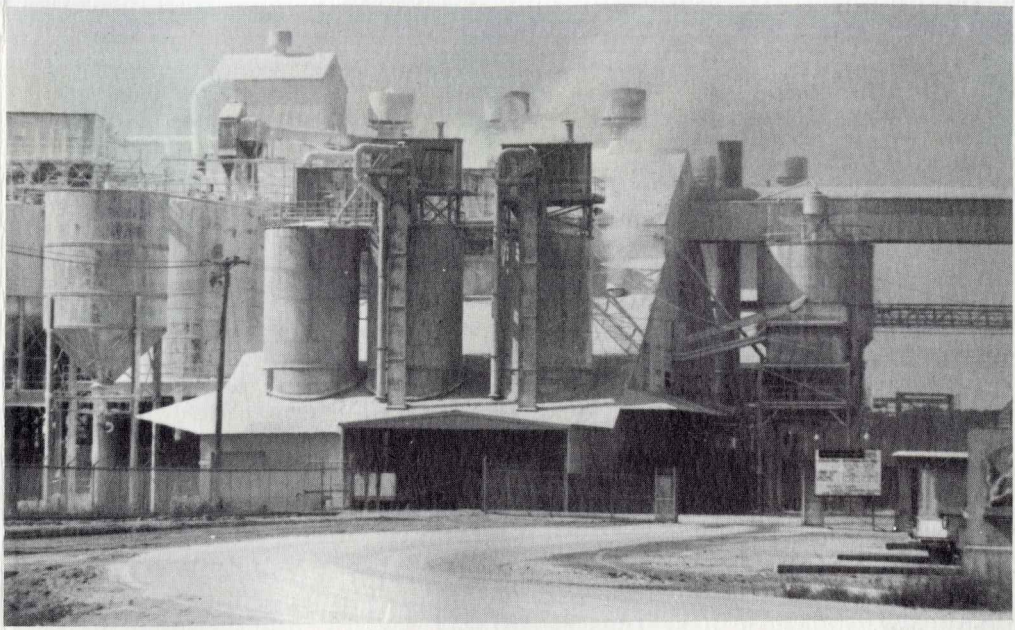
To shed
The impossible blood
Is real.
World of Faustians,
Walking across a tightrope called
A universe,
When will the rope-tight nerves
Shatter and reverse?

Oh private wilson white,
AMERICA is proud tonight;
A woman trembles in the dark for you
But AMERICA sings of you tonight.

HEAVY ON MY MIND

I look out and see the sanity in
The spector as he glides forth like a rasp,
Hark! The plain of remorse is no more;
On the horizon we see the sails
Of neglect and the mast of forlorn,
Up from the depths comes the
Cry of an undaunted spirit,
Alas! The wind lashes at the
Apathy of my mind,
By the scope of the precipise
Of truth down flows the vile
Of evil and cynality of what
Our mouth cannot say,
Our ears cannot hear,
And our eyes cannot see:

The blood of life shed upon
A quest which is vanishing in the haze.



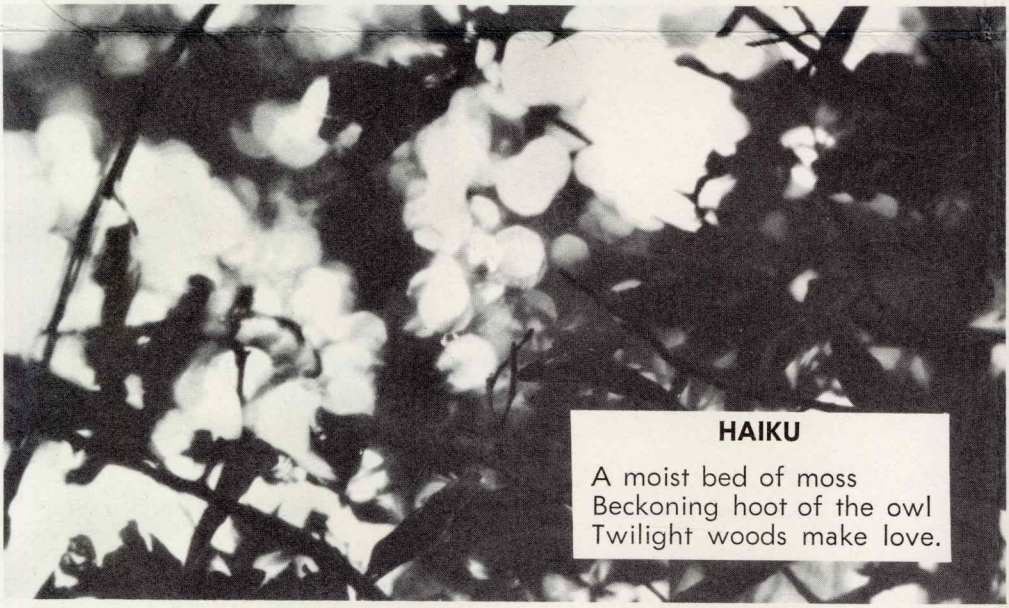
CITY

Factory smokestacks rape the sky:
Orgasmic fumes; then bastard child
Of sunless city days

And street lamp-sterile nights:
The barren womb of neon glow
Stagnates with dull unborn star seeds.

GRAMMAR

I live between the lines
Amid exquisite words and sterling phrases.
Staring from behind semi-colons,
I watch the world
And rearrange my words to the flavor of the afternoon.
I play with clauses and causes
Of why, when, where, how, and for whom.
Come between the lines
And exercise letters and
Watch the world from my question mark.



HAIKU

A moist bed of moss
Beckoning hoot of the owl
Twilight woods make love.

SILENT DAUGHTERS

Oh why do I still see
your dark eyes shining
burning behind your lashes,
Dear sister; It is the seed within
burning with the strength of your unborn sons
and the beauty of silent daughters,
silent, resting, waiting to be conceived
wanting to be born out of the warmth
that burns from behind your
so very dark eyes when
with trembling hands I touch your chin,
then your mouth, in my dreams
before the night comes rushing round
with its black silence.

#20

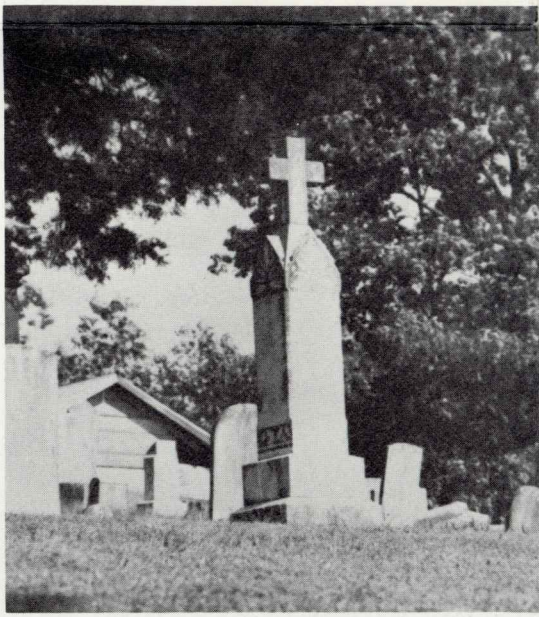
I met the old man
On the quadrangle today;
The one who walks in
A queer shuffling way
And looks upon the world
With a sightless soul.
And I, being very large in myself
Smiled at him.
While he, who was nothing at all
In himself,
Smiled back at me.
And thus we were
One
In our
Mutual humaneness.

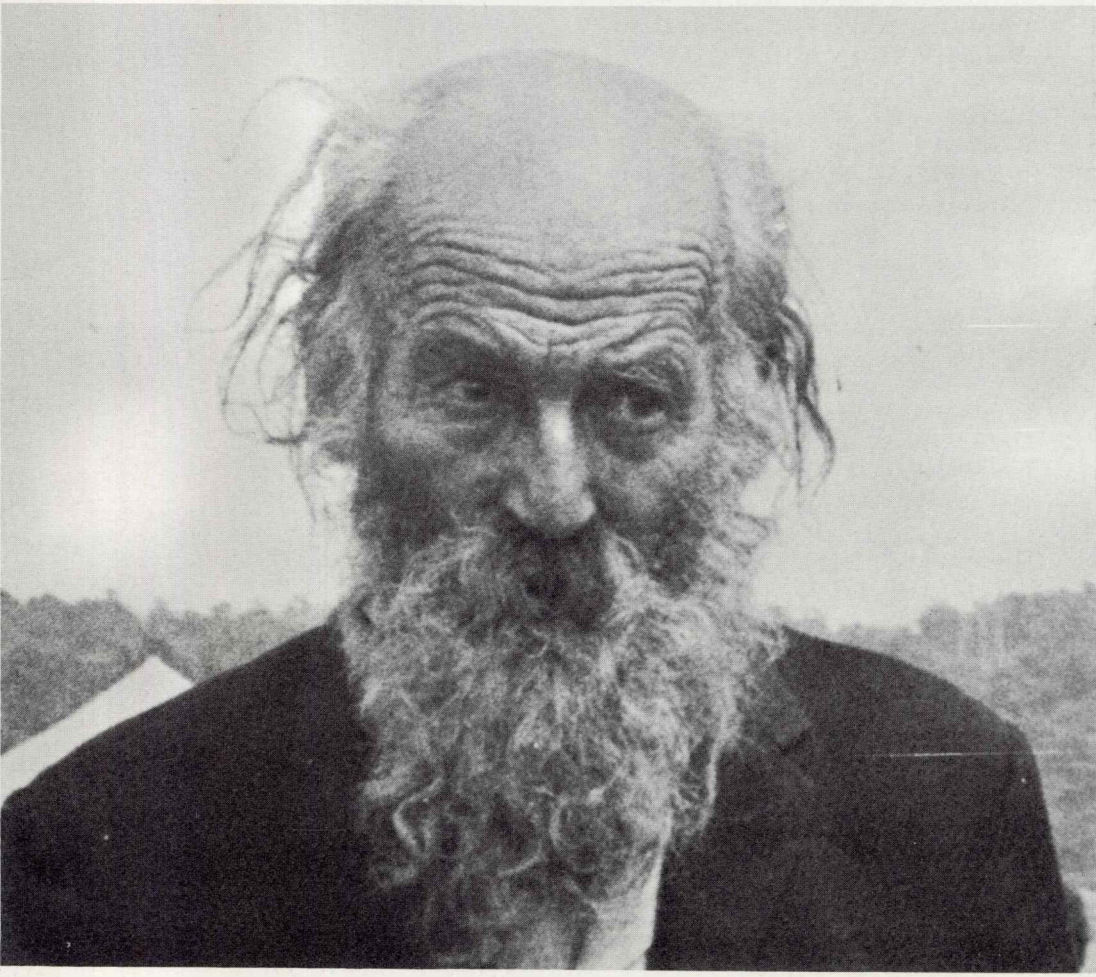
STRINGS

Ever
Since
I slid from
The bleeding cave
I have been untied.

And after whisker time
When trapped by wanton limbs,
I have syphoned the throbbing force
through my fertile straw—
The warm snares uncurl—
And again I am untied.

And when I'm wrapped
With pain and time—
My throat full of rattle—
The good wenches will
Cut my thread
And at last I will be undone.





NO TIME TO SING

America has no song to sing
No chant or music stave
The hymns that made its mountains ring
Have fallen in silent graves.

The song of work is heard no more
Its thought is lost in time
Its tempo is not repeated ore
Forgotten is its rhyme.

America's song was not put
On paper to be read
It was the song of everyday, but
Now it is dead.

It was a song of inspiration
Of neighbor helping neighbor
It was the laughter of a nation
The jingling of a saber.

Now the song of apathy
Is mixed with song of riot
It has no pleasing harmony
The song of work is quiet.

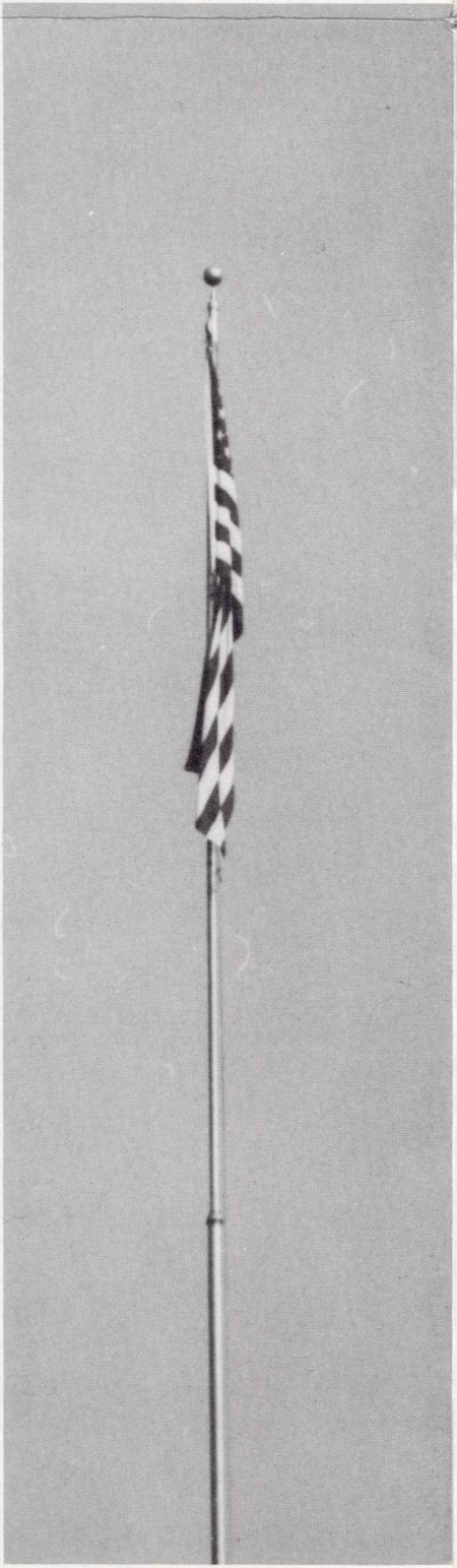
The new song does not sing in hills
It does not catch your breath
It echoes not in rcoks and rills
It is the Song of Death.

In city slums the new song lurks
And in jungles far away
Too, it lies in a cynic's smirk
And in tenements finds its prey.

The new song is not sung by one
It is rumbled phrase by phrase
It is a broken, evil dun
It summons darker days.

It has no chanted evil spell
No special evil tune
A shout, a word, a taunt that tells
One of impending doom.

America has no song to sing
No chant or music stave
The hymns that made its mountains ring
Have fallen in silent graves.



AT THE FIRST DAY'S END

Betrothed
The ocean blushed
    while
The sun savored his sizzling entrance
Having wound the first loop about the firmament.
His rays had made straight paths in torrid tangence,
But curled now—more as
Tendrils round the troth of his world,
To swell and coax before complete self loss
    during
Dubious twilight sinking at last
Between false complaints
Of purple writhing waves.

And the fire, after being one with brine,
Leaps up again and again
With closer bond made fast by
Time's twine only—invisible thread
Dragged round and through that
Lovesick fertile sphere.

YET . . . THERE IS TIME

small yellow spots on a broken piece of mirror
    crushed by old women in time worn rocking chairs,
long forgotten disturbed dust in dark dead end alleys
    between brown stone buildings,
soggy sand castles
    with half crumbled towers,
table tops with empty teaspoon sugarbags
    in stainless steel bowls,
brown sweat stained leather girdles
    smelling of one crying in the wilderness,

and sleep will win,

Yet . . . there is time
    not for words.